EPICS & MYTHOLOGY

TAPATI

Tapati, the daughter of Surya, catches sight of the mortal Samvarana and falls in love with him. She appears before him in the forest, and he is so enchanted by her he swoons and falls on the ground.

Walking along a river bank one day, Sage Sthulakesha sees a little girl lying abandoned there. He takes her home and names her Pramadvara. When Pramadvara grows up, she falls in love with Ruru. But just a few weeks before their wedding, she is bitten by a snake and dies. Ruru wanders into the forest, beside himself with grief.

Both these stories are taken from the Mahabharata. Tapati and Samvarana had a son named Kuru, the ancestor of the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The field of Kurukshetra upon which the battle takes place is also named after Kuru.

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BRAVEHEARTS

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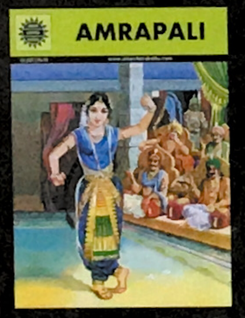

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TAPATI

DAUGHTER OF THE SUN GOD

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SAMVARANA AND TAPATI

SAMVARANA, RULER OF THE KINGDOM OF THE BHARATAS, HEARD WITH A HEAVY HEART, REPORTS FROM HIS MINISTERS OF THE SUFFERINGS OF HIS SUBJECTS.

FAMINE, DROUGHT AND DISEASE STALK THE LAND.

OUR PEOPLE ARE DYING BY THE HUNDRED...

... AND THOSE THAT ARE ALIVE, CONSIDER THEIR PLIGHT TO BE WORSE THAN DEATH.

AH! WHAT A WRETCHED KING I AM THAT I MUST SEE MY PEOPLE SUFFER THUS!

BUT WORSE IS TO COME. FOR...

...THE...THE PANCHALAS HAVE DECLARED WAR ON US.

SAMVARANA'S HEART SANK AS HE LED HIS ARMY TO THE FIELD OF BATTLE TO FACE THE MIGHTIER FORCE OF THE PANCHALAS.

THEIR ARMY IS MUCH BIGGER AND THEIR SOLDIERS BETTER FED. YET, AS KING I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO FIGHT.

SAMVARANA AND HIS MEN BRAVELY FOUGHT THE ENEMY.

HOWEVER, THE ODDS AGAINST THEM WERE TOO GREAT.

IT'S ALL OVER FOR US.

HUMILIATED AND GRIEF-STRICKEN, SAMVARANA FLED WITH HIS MEN AND HIS FAMILY TO THE FOREST ON THE BANKS OF THE SINDHU *.

* THE INDUS

AND THE BHARATAS BUILT A FORT THERE AND LIVED IN IT.

FOR MANY YEARS SAMVARANA LIVED IN THE WILDERNESS NURSING THE WOUND OF DEFEAT.

THEN, ONE DAY, THE VENERABLE SAGE, VASISHTHA, VISITED THE FORT. SAMVARANA RECEIVED HIM WITH REVERENCE.

GREAT ONE, WE HAVE LOST OUR KINGDOM. WE ARE UNABLE TO PRACTISE OUR DHARMA.

BE OUR GURU, REVERED SAGE. YOUR PRESENCE AND YOUR PRAYERS WILL HELP US REGAIN OUR KINGDOM.

VASISHTHA SMILED.

SO BE IT.

I AM INDEED BLESSED.

BLESSED' DID YOU SAY, SAMVARANA? THAT KING IS BLESSED WHO RULES OVER THE KINGDOM OF HIS FOREFATHERS IN ALL DIGNITY AND HONOUR...

...NOT ONE WHO LIVES IN EXILE.

REVERED ONE...

WHY HAVE YOU ALLOWED YOUR DEFEAT TO SHATTER YOU SO? CHALLENGE THE PANCHALAS TO A BATTLE AND REGAIN YOUR THRONE.

MY PRESENCE WILL NOT WORK MIRACLES FOR YOU, SAMVARANA. IT IS BY YOUR OWN EFFORTS THAT YOUR DESIRE WILL BE FULFILLED.

GREAT SAGE, YOUR WORDS GIVE ME COURAGE. THIS VERY DAY, I WILL START MAKING PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.

GOOD! I WILL PRAY FOR YOUR VICTORY.

THE SAGE'S PRESENCE HAS HAD ITS EFFECT ON OUR KING. WE ARE BOUND TO SEE BETTER TIMES!

SAMVARANA RALLIED HIS LOYAL SOLDIERS AND DECLARED WAR ON THE PANCHALAS. HE FOUGHT LIKE ONE INSPIRED.

SAMVARANA'S VIGOUR AND VALOUR WON THE ADMIRATION, THE VERY HEART OF TAPATI, THE DAUGHTER OF SURYA*.

HOW BRAVE HE IS! AND STRONG AND HANDSOME TOO!

TAKEN BY SURPRISE BUT NOT DISPLEASED, SURYA SMILED TO HIMSELF AND LOOKED AT HER.

TAPATI, MY CHILD...

UM?

*SUN - GOD

TAPATI, LOOK AT ME...OR DO YOU HAVE EYES FOR NONE ELSE TODAY?

!...
!...

NEVER BEFORE HAVE I SEEN YOU SO ENTRANCED BY THE SIGHT OF A MORTAL. DO YOU DESIRE HIM FOR A HUSBAND, CHILD?

YES, FATHER.

BUT, FATHER... HE...I... HOW DO I KNOW IF...

WE WILL SOON FIND OUT.

SAMVARANA WON THE WAR AND ASCENDED HIS THRONE ONCE MORE.

ONE DAY, SAMVARANA SET OUT ON A HUNT WITH A FEW COMPANIONS.

LOOK— A DEER! AFTER IT!

THE CHASE BEGAN. SAMVARANA SOON LEFT THE OTHERS BEHIND...

..AND FOUND HIMSELF RIDING ALL ALONE ON THE WOODED MOUNTAINSIDE.

HOW FIERCELY SURYA SHINES TODAY! I AM EXHAUSTED. MY HORSE MUST BE SO, TOO.

IT WAS, FOR IT SUDDENLY TOTTERED AND FELL.

MY POOR ONE, IT HAS BEEN TOO MUCH FOR YOU. COME, LET US LOOK FOR A STREAM.

AT A STREAM THEY DRANK THEIR FILL.

THEN AS SAMVARANA ROSE TO HIS FEET...

...HE WAS DAZZLED BY A BRILLIANT SIGHT. IT WAS A WOMAN— THE MOST RADIANT ONE HE HAD EVER SET EYES ON.

BATHED IN HER SPLENDOUR, THE VERY CREEPERS AND PLANTS SEEMED TO HAVE TURNED INTO GOLD.

SUCH A GREAT BEAUTY MUST HAVE BEEN FASHIONED BY CHURNING OUT THE BEST FROM DEVA, ASURA AND MAN! OR IS SHE GODDESS SRI* HERSELF?

SAMVARANA FOUND HIMSELF WALKING TOWARDS HER.

O FLAWLESS ONE, WHO ARE YOU? NO DEVA, ASURA OR HUMAN MAIDEN I HAVE SEEN CAN COMPARE WITH YOU IN BEAUTY!

* LAKSHMI - THE GODESS OF WEALTH

THOUGH DECKED OUT IN JEWELS, YOU EMERGE THE MOST COVETED JEWEL OF THEM ALL.

YOU ARE LOVELIER THAN THE MOON.

I AM... FILLED... WITH... WITH LONGING...

SHE IS GONE! VANISHED!

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION BY HER SUDDEN DISAPPEARANCE, SAMVARANA WANDERED HITHER AND THITHER THROUGH THE FOREST, SEARCHING FOR HER.

AT LAST, DEJECTED AND GRIEF-STRICKEN...

...HE FAINTED.

RISE, O BEST OF KINGS! IT IS NOT PROPER FOR YOU WHO ARE FAMED THROUGHOUT THE LAND, TO LOSE YOUR COMPOSURE THUS.

I CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT YOU, O BEAUTIFUL ONE. BE MY WIFE! BECOME MINE... NOW... BY THE GANDHARVA RITES! IT IS SAID TO BE THE BEST OF ALL FORMS OF MARRIAGE.

O KING, I DO NOT WISH TO WED YOU BY THE GANDHARVA* RITES. I HAVE A LOVING FATHER...

...WHO WILL NOT STAND IN OUR WAY. APPROACH HIM AND ASK FOR MY HAND.

APPROACH HIM THROUGH PENANCE AND MEDITATION. FOR...

*A PRIVATE CONTRACT AS OPPOSED TO A MARRIAGE WITH VEDIC RITES

...MY FATHER IS THE ILLUMINATOR OF THE UNIVERSE.

I AM TAPATI, THE DAUGHTER OF SURYA.

TAPATI!

SAMVARANA SAT DOWN, AND BEGAN TO WORSHIP THE SUN BY DAY AND BY NIGHT.

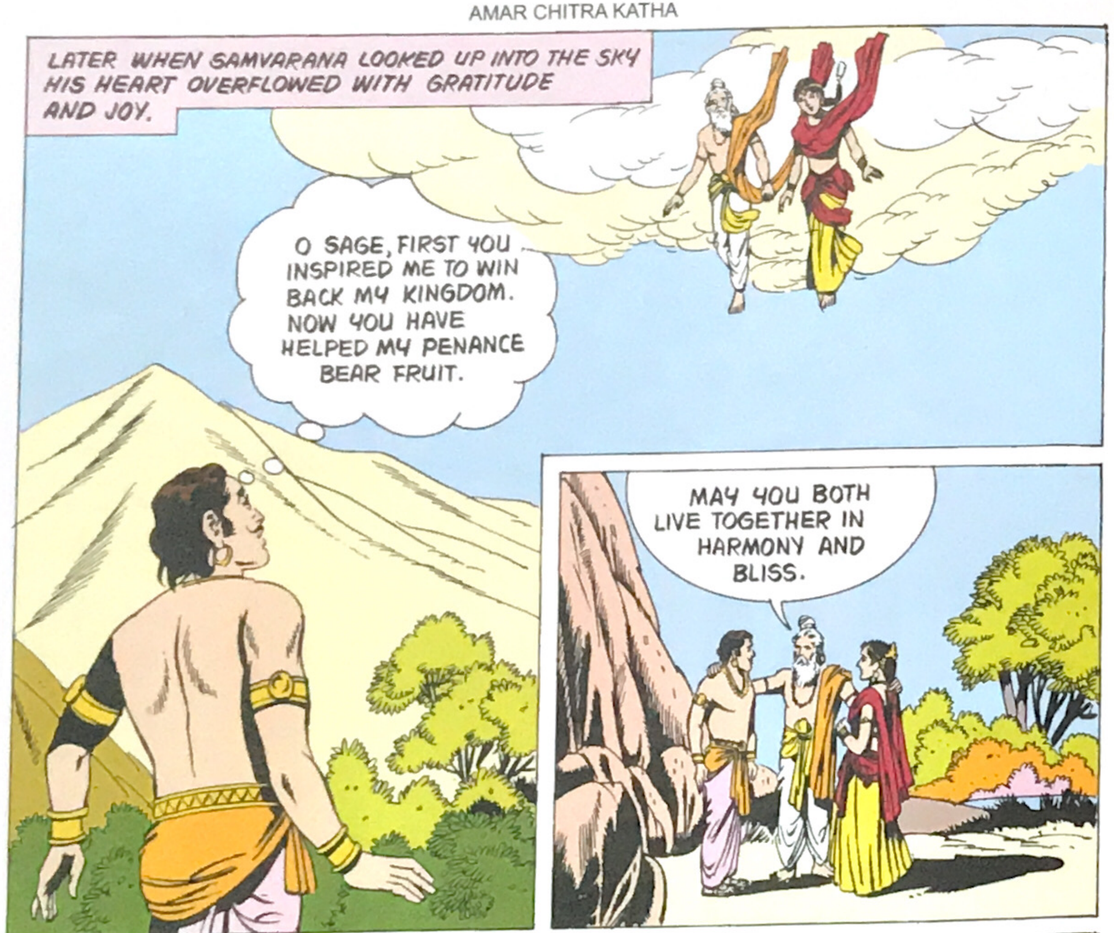
ON THE TWELFTH DAY OF HIS PENANCE, VASISHTHA CAME TO HIM.

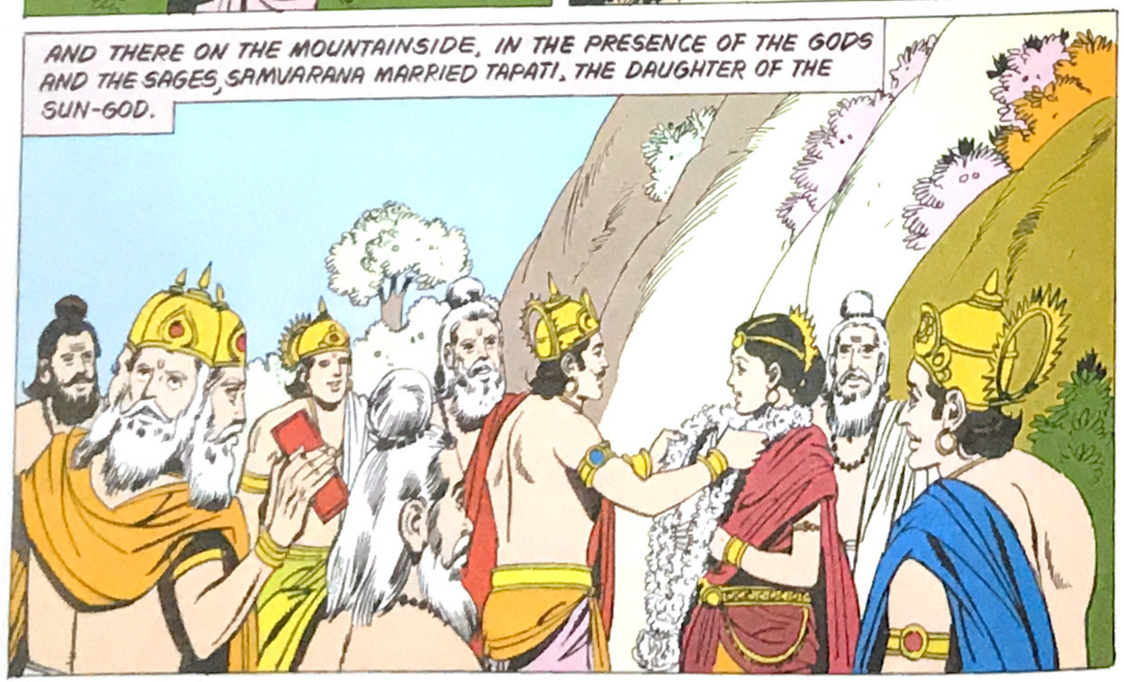
SAMVARANA, I KNOW WHAT YOUR DESIRE IS. IT SHALL BE FULFILLED.

I SHALL IN PERSON APPROACH THE SUN-GOD.

I AM VASISHTHA, O SURYA. KING SAMVARANA SOLICITS THE HAND OF YOUR DAUGHTER TAPATI IN MARRIAGE.

O SAGE, WHEN THE BEST OF MONARCHS SEEKS THE HAND OF THE BEST OF WOMEN, WHAT COULD BE MORE PROPER THAN BLESSING THEIR UNION.





ONE TOON
ONE STORY
ONE-DERFULLY LONG...
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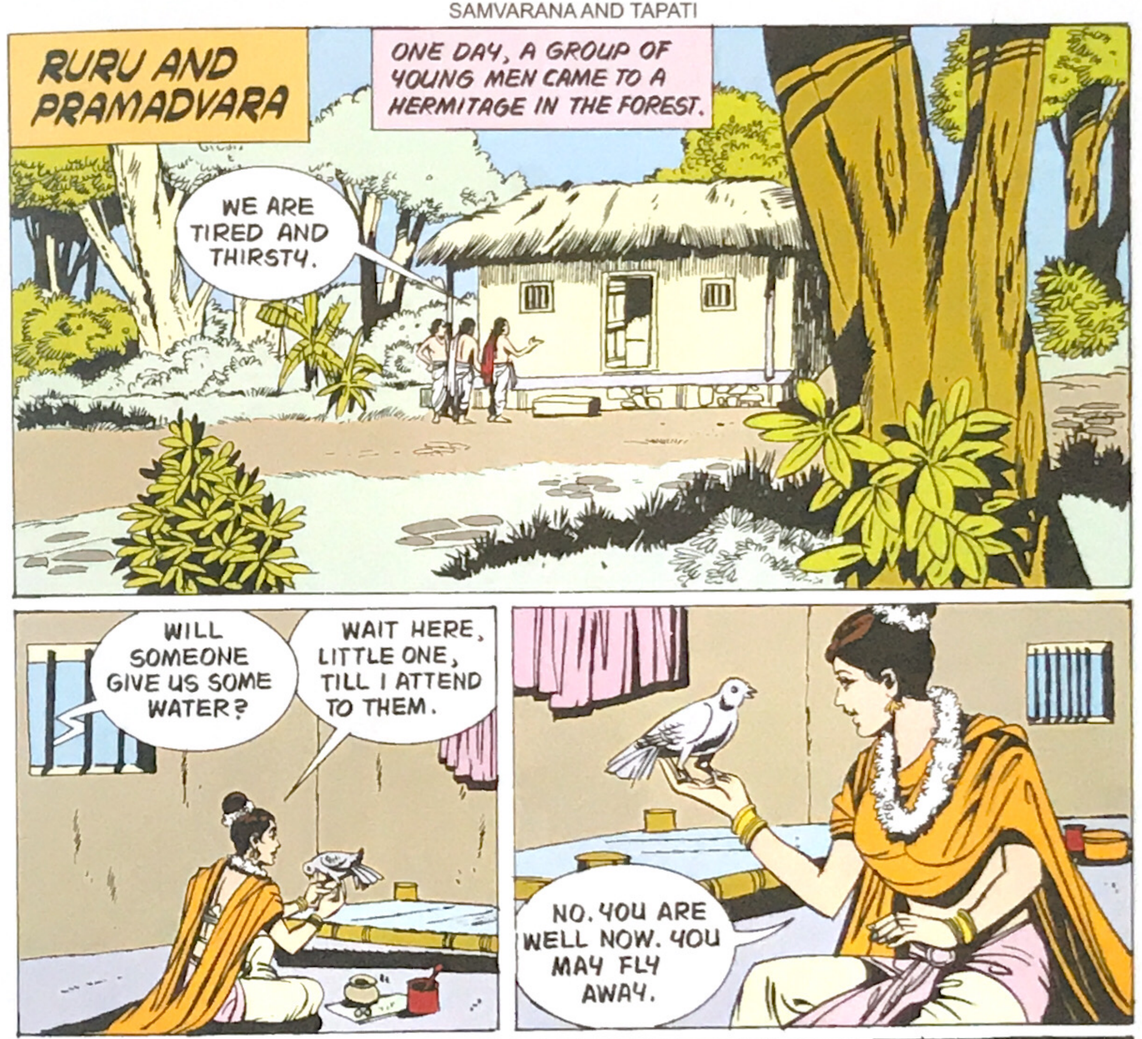
RURU AND PRAMADVARA
ONE DAY, A GROUP OF YOUNG MEN CAME TO A HERMITAGE IN THE FOREST.
WE ARE TIRED AND THIRSTY.
WILL SOMEONE GIVE US SOME WATER?
WAIT HERE, LITTLE ONE, TILL I ATTEND TO THEM.
NO. YOU ARE WELL NOW. YOU MAY FLY AWAY.
DID MY LITTLE ONE STARTLE YOU?

DAD, DID YOU TAKE MY TINKLE?
I DID...BUT YOUR MOTHER GRABBED IT FROM ME BEFORE I COULD FINISH!
MOM, WHERE'S MY TINKLE!
I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW TOO! IT'S MISSING!
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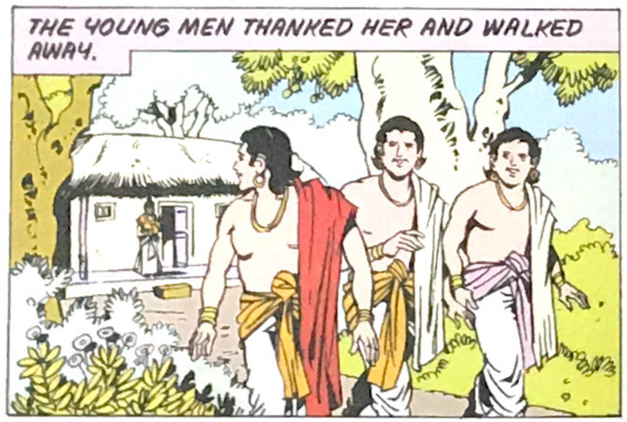
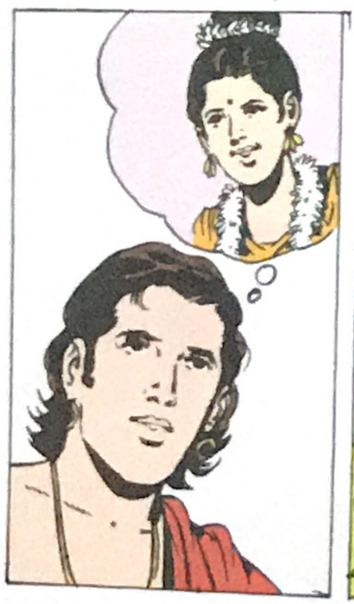
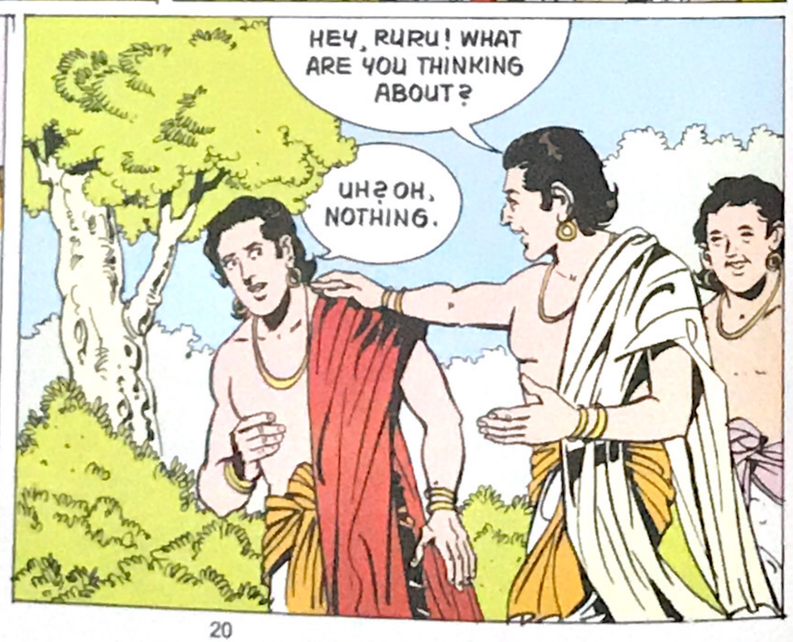
WHAT'S THE MATTER? WHY DO YOU STARE AT ME SO? DIDN'T YOU WANT SOME WATER?

OH... U...YES.

THAT WAS THE SWEETEST WATER I HAVE EVER TASTED!
YOU WERE VERY THIRSTY, SIR.

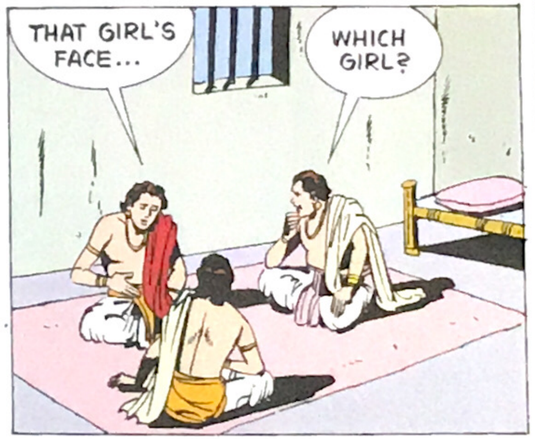

THE YOUNG MEN THANKED HER AND WALKED AWAY.

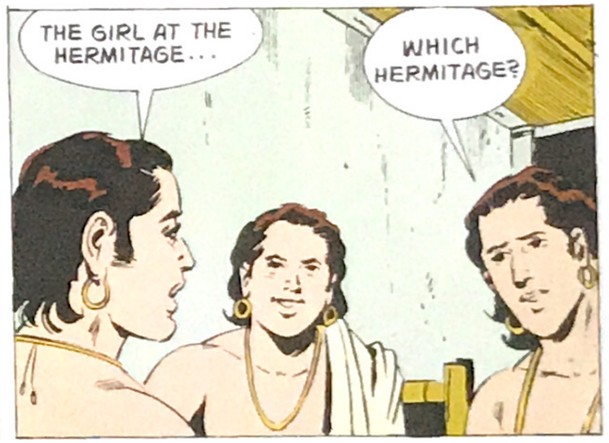



HEY, RURU! WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT?
UH? OH, NOTHING.

RURU WAS THE SON OF THE BRAHMANA, PRAMATI.
I WILL HAVE TO TELL THEM. HOW ELSE WILL I LET FATHER KNOW!

THAT EVENING WHEN THEY MET—
I CANNOT FORGET HER. THAT FACE...
WHICH FACE? WHOSE FACE?


THAT GIRL'S FACE...
WHICH GIRL?


THE GIRL AT THE HERMITAGE...
WHICH HERMITAGE?

DON'T TEASE ME. YOU KNOW WHO I MEAN!
WE DO; WE DO VERY WELL, INDEED.

TELL MY FATHER THAT I WOULD LIKE TO MARRY HER. WILL YOU?

THE NEXT DAY WHEN PRAMATI HEARD THE NEWS FROM RURU'S FRIENDS —

I AM PLEASED TO KNOW THAT MY SON HAS CHOSEN A BRIDE FOR HIMSELF. LET US GO TO THE HERMITAGE AT ONCE.

THE GIRL MEANWHILE WAS BUSY TENDING HER PLANTS.

THIS STICK WILL MAKE YOU GROW STRAIGHT AND TALL. THERE!

OH... IT'S... HIM!

STHULAKESHA, I HAVE COME TO ASK FOR THE HAND OF YOUR DAUGHTER FOR MY SON.

PRAMATI, I COULD WISH FOR NO BETTER HUSBAND FOR MY CHILD.

BUT YOU MUST ALSO KNOW THAT SHE IS MY DAUGHTER BY ADOPTION. ONE DAY I WAS WALKING ALONG THE BANK OF A RIVER WHEN...

ARE MY EYES DECEIVING ME...?

NO... IT IS AN ABANDONED INFANT. ABANDONED BY SOME MERCILESS APSARA NO DOUBT.

"I TOOK HOME THE CHILD THAT BLAZED, AS IT WERE, WITH BEAUTY AND PERFORMED FOR HER ALL THE CEREMONIES PRESCRIBED IN THE SCRIPTURES.

"AND HERE IN MY HERMITAGE, UNDER MY TENDER CARE, MY LITTLE DAUGHTER...

"HAS GROWN INTO WOMANHOOD. FOR HER SURPASSING BEAUTY, HER GOODNESS AND GENEROSITY, I NAMED HER PRAMADVARA."

SIR, WHOEVER SHE MAY BE, I WANT TO MARRY HER.

AND SO —

MY CHILDREN — YOU ARE NOW BETROTHED.

ON THE AUSPICIOUS DAY, WHEN THE STAR VARGA DAIVATA IS IN THE ASCENDANT, YOU SHALL BE MAN AND WIFE.

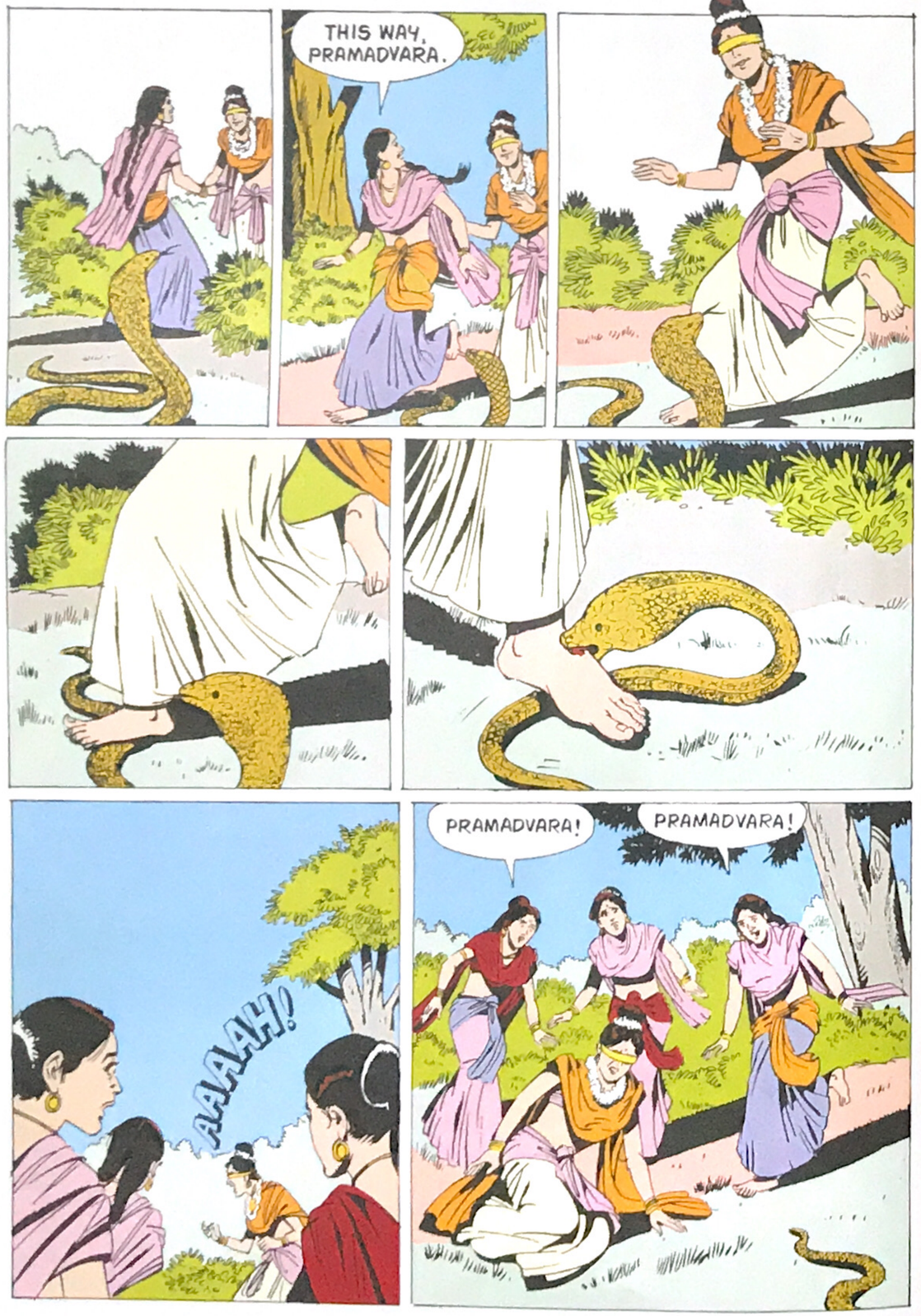
THERE WERE NONE HAPPIER IN THAT FOREST THAT DAY, THAN RURU AND PRAMADVARA.

LITTLE DID RURU SUSPECT THAT FATE WOULD SOON END HIS HAPPINESS WITH ONE CRUEL STROKE. IT HAPPENED A FEW WEEKS BEFORE THE DAY OF THE WEDDING. PRAMADVARA WAS PLAYING WITH HER FRIENDS.

I AM RURU. COME HERE, PRAMADVARA.

NO, I AM RURU. COME AND CATCH ME.

HA, HA, HA!


THIS WAY, PRAMADVARA.
AAAAH!
PRAMADVARA!
PRAMADVARA!

NO!
LIKE A BLOSSOM, WITHERED BY A SHARP WIND, PRAMADVARA LAY THERE, CRUMPLED, PALE AND DEAD.
THEN, AS IF DEATH, WITH ITS WORST WEAPONS, COULD NOT CRUSH BEAUTY, PRAMADVARA'S LIFELESS BODY BLOOMED AGAIN AND LOOKED LOVELIER THAN IT HAD IN LIFE.

THE NEWS SPREAD. FILLED WITH COMPASSION, THE DWELLERS OF THAT FOREST, THE SAGES KUSHIKA, UDDALAKA, BHARADWAJA, GOUTAMA AND OTHERS, CAME TO THE HERMITAGE.

TAKE HEART, O STHULAKESHA.

POOR CHILD!

POOR, INNOCENT CHILD!

JUST THEN—

RURU, WHY HAS THIS HAPPENED? WHY?

RURU TURNED AND LEFT THE PLACE...

...AND BLINDLY MADE HIS WAY TO THE FOREST. AND THERE —

WOEFUL AND MISERABLE AM I THAT WITH THESE EYES I SAW MY BRIDE LYING DEAD.

SHE WHO HEALED OTHER LIVING CREATURES IS NOW BEYOND ALL HEALING.

IF I HAVE BEEN CHARITABLE; IF I HAVE OBSERVED THE SACRED PENANCE; IF I HAVE SHOWN RESPECT TO MY ELDERS...

...LET THE MERIT OF THESE ACTS RESTORE MY BELOVED TO LIFE.

SUDDENLY —

O RURU, YOUR GRIEF CANNOT BRING PRAMADVARA BACK TO LIFE.

A DEVADOOTA* STOOD BEFORE RURU.

ONE WHOSE DAYS ON THIS EARTH ARE OVER CANNOT RETURN TO LIFE AGAIN.

YET THE GODS HAVE PROVIDED A MEANS TO RESTORE PRAMADVARA TO LIFE.

IF YOU GIVE UP HALF OF YOUR OWN LIFE FOR YOUR BRIDE, THEN PRAMADVARA WILL LIVE AGAIN.

JUST HALF MY LIFE WHEN I WOULD SURRENDER IT ALL FOR HER SAKE?

O HEAVENLY BEING, HEAR THIS. HERE AND NOW, I GIVE UP HALF OF MY SPAN OF LIFE. LET MY BRIDE ARISE.

THE NEXT MOMENT, AT THE HERMITAGE—

UNNN...

PRAMADVARA... MY CHILD...

★A CELESTIAL MESSENGER

WHERE IS HE?

PRAMADVARA, PRAMADVARA.

MADVARA MADVARA

STHULAKESHA AND PRAMATI PERFORMED THE MARRIAGE OF THEIR CHILDREN ON THE APPOINTED DAY...

...AND THE YOUNG COUPLE LIVED A LIFE OF BLISS.